



FACT SHEET

BRIDGESTONE/FIRESTONE, INC. REJUVENATES THE SRS REGION

Office of Worker & Community Transition

Background and Challenges

In 1952, the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site (SRS) began producing tritium and plutonium for the Nation's nuclear weapons stockpile. Then in 1989, after more than 40 years of supporting the Nation's nuclear weapons complex, SRS changed its mission and refocused its work force toward activities and efforts associated with waste management and environmental restoration missions. These changes required extensive work force restructuring. Between 1993 and 1998, SRS experienced a reduction of approximately 6,700 prime contractor employees.

The Path to Progress

As the designated Community Reuse Organization (CRO) for the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site, the Savannah River Regional Diversification Initiative (SRRDI) is responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive plan to diversify the economy of the region. SRRDI's region consists of five counties, Columbia and Richmond counties in Georgia, and Aiken, Allendale and Barnwell counties in South Carolina. In response to the downsizing of SRS, the region's largest employer, SRRDI outlined a comprehensive strategy to mitigate the adverse economic effects on the region.

As part of this effort to diversify the economy and attract new industries to the region, SRRDI worked with the South Carolina Department of Commerce and the Aiken-Edgefield Economic Development Partnership to provide funding for a needed rail spur and training facility for a potential new industry. DOE provided SRRDI with \$3.2 million in community assistance funds to support the construction of a rail spur to the site and the acquisition of a building in Aiken, South Carolina for Bridgestone/Firestone, Inc. to conduct the training of their new employees.



A view inside Bridgestone/Firestone's 1.5 million square foot facility in Aiken, South Carolina. Funding to provide the infrastructure for the project came from the State, Aiken County, the Department of Commerce, and DOE.



Bridgestone/Firestone officials inspect some of the first 25,000 light truck tires that were produced in the Aiken, South Carolina plant. Just one year after the start of construction, this was the fastest built tire production plant in the world.



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Community Success Stories

Bridgestone/Firestone Creates New Jobs

Through its efforts, SRRDI has helped to diversify the region's economic base; create and retain high value, long-term private sector jobs; and transfer SRS technologies to new and existing area firms for commercial application promoting valuable economic benefits to the region. Bridgestone/Firestone, Inc. serves as an example of these efforts.



The Bridgestone/Firestone Racing team

In August of 1997, Bridgestone/Firestone, Inc. announced construction of a \$435 million tire manufacturing facility in Graniteville, South Carolina. The magnitude of this project was such that its footprint could not adequately fit in the new Sage Mill Industrial Park. A location directly across from Sage Mill was selected. As of March 1, 1999, Bridgestone/Firestone employs 488 people and will ultimately create 800 new jobs when the plant reaches full production.

Contact Information

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